

# **CANDY CRUSH**

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN FILM PRODUCTION  
YORK UNIVERSITY  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

JANUARY 2016

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## Abstract

*Candy Crush* is a short experimental film that explores varied experiences of migrants who leave their childhood memories and historical roots behind. It interweaves two narratives the reminiscences of a migrant (myself) who has left Iran for Canada; and the story of a pregnant woman who has travelled to Canada with her four-year old daughter in order to gain Canadian citizenship for the newborn.

The film narrates these stories through the perspective of a child, and consists of text-on-screen narration, green-screen tableaux, documentary sequences and animation. The documentary portions were filmed when I was taking care of the four year old while her mother was dealing with pregnancy and delivery. During that period, I had to establish a close relationship with the child and answer all her questions in regards to the cultural differences between Iran and Canada. I had to use my cat, guitar, television, and candy shopping in order to distract her attention from some topics that were difficult to discuss. However, I hate candies, since they remind me of my own childhood isolation. These childhood memories were revived when I took the little girl candy shopping. The result is *Candy Crush*, a film about my own childhood memories that are interweaved with the story of the little girl's migration to Canada.

## **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank Professors John Greyson (Thesis Supervisor), Barbara Evans (Reader), and Ali Kazimi (Reader) for their support for the completion of this thesis work. In addition, I would like to thank and acknowledge Nazanin Azari (Photographer), Hengameh Gorji (Graphic Artist), and Davoud Mantegh (Graphic Artist) for the visuals.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	iv
List of Figures .....	v
Introduction .....	1
Development of the Idea .....	3
Filmmaker's Background .....	7
Cinematic Influence .....	11
Aesthetic Approach .....	16
Production .....	18
Visual Style .....	20
Creative Process with Actors .....	22
Post Production .....	23
Special Effects .....	24
Technical Process .....	24
Sound .....	24
Conclusion .....	26
Bibliography .....	27
Filmography .....	28
Appendix .....	29
Candy Crush Captions .....	29

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Little girl paints death as a butterfly .....	3
Figure 2: Expressing sisterhood to the newborn.....	5
Figure 3: Candy means love .....	18
Figure 4: The little girl loved cats. It helped us to get close quickly .....	20
Figure 5: Do not call! You will be expelled from school and be illiterate for the rest of your life.....	21
Figure 6: He went to war, and never came back. ....	23

## Introduction

*Candy Crush* is a film that interweaves two stories, one dealing with a specific memory from the filmmaker's childhood during the 1980s Iran-Iraq war, and one in the present, where I as the filmmaker observe how a young girl deals with the arrival of a new born sibling. Throughout the film, I function as a first person narrator who remembers her childhood through the visual devices of animation and illustration. In contrast, the film uses documentary shots to convey the present day story of the girl, the new baby and the filmmaker/observer. *Candy Crush* is thus a hybrid work that combines various genres, visual methods and story-telling modes. In both the past and the present, some layers of these stories are presented in the form of text inserts. This film consists of two separate stories that unfold during different periods of time. The first story is the tale of a four-year-old girl who is curious about the birth of her sibling. The other story is about an eight-year-old girl who is trying to comprehend tangible meanings for love and affection towards the opposite sex.

The purpose of this project is a personal quest to explore how past memories can shape and color present experiences. By correlating these two different autobiographical stories, (and their two different forms of reality), I am engaging with questions of emigration by people that leave every aspect of their life and identity behind to advance their personal situations, without being subjected to a life-threatening force to do so. In other words, the film portrays the attempt to advance in life rather than to merely survive.

Documentary shots of daily activities are used to show that the first story takes place in the present. These images were captured in an observational style. However, the filming process was not a practice of cinema vérité (in the manner of Bill Nichols passive observational 'direct

cinema'). In other words, I have played an active role, engaging with the girl by being the aunt who takes care of the family as the delivery date approaches, with the filmmaking becoming a form of game-playing.

Unlike the first story, the second scenario is a fictional representation of my own childhood, when I thought of love as an exchange of candy between a boy and a girl. It was after seeing a piece of candy that I remembered, how as a child, I used to hate candy. It was crucial to search deep within myself in order to remember that feeling, and trace the hatred all the way back to its source. Thus, the film is a documentation of the present and the situation that caused a childhood memory and old feelings to resurface. In this support paper, I discuss the analytical and technical processes of presenting these two stories.

## Development of the Idea

The original idea for my thesis was a feature-length drama, *The Story of Two Blue Butterflies*, about a struggling immigrant family haunted by its past and dealing with the sudden diagnosis of the family's eight-year-old child with leukemia. I spent several months drafting the script and choosing the cast.

The story came to me when I was making a film in a hospital. There was a little girl in the hospital who was recovering from a brain tumor surgery. She often cried quietly to avoid the attention of others. It was unlike any other crying that I had ever heard. She told me it was not because she was in pain but because of guilt. She felt guilty for causing sorrow, desperation, and heartache for her mother who often prayed for her daughter, even though she was not religious. The fact that her mother was forced to quit her successful and satisfying career in order to take care of her child had fueled the feeling of guilt. One day I noticed that the little girl had painted a big butterfly. When I asked about the meaning of the drawing, her answer came to me as a surprise. She simply said, "It is death". Later, I learned that sick children often draw death as butterflies.

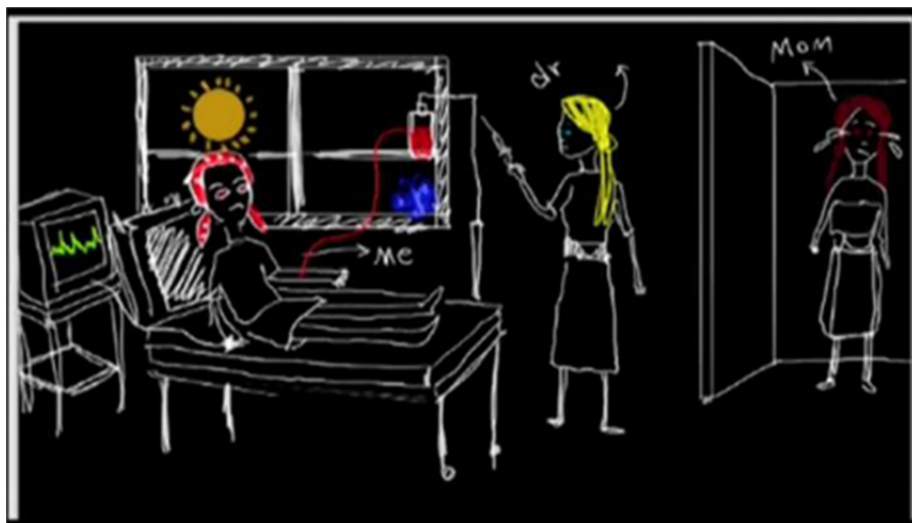


Figure 1: Little girl paints death as a butterfly



The girl died a few months later but the experience brought me to the story of Viona, an eight year old girl with leukemia. The film was going to be a feature melodrama with multiple metaphoric layers. Viona's father Damon was an immigrant oncologist who came to Canada with a student visa and decided to stay after marrying Sarah. Damon and Sarah decide to have another baby after finding out about Viona's illness and the need for bone marrow transplantation from another offspring. However, the problem is that Viona's biological father is not Damon, but he is unaware of it. This triggers a new dilemma to find Jeremy, Sarah's ex-boyfriend and Viona's real father. After nine years of being apart, Sarah has no choice but to find Jeremy and get impregnated by him one more time. An internal conflict between love and fidelity is ignited when she discovers that Jeremy has been married to Maria, a deaf and mute woman who has a very high sense of understanding for rhythm and texture. Thus, Sarah is placed in a very difficult situation where she has to make a choice between motherhood and womanhood. The story was full of elements and details about childhood fears, loneliness, immigration, history, culture, and homesickness.

There was another layer to the story as well. Two animated butterflies, representing death, were going to be present throughout the story. A graphic designer had already started working on the animation. I had also started my table readings and rehearsing with a little girl for the role of Viona. However, the project had to be stopped due to lack of budget and an unsuccessful fundraising campaign. Instead, I took another path to create a short film that would explore similar themes such as childhood, daily routines, immigration, and struggle.

Like my previous works, the new story consisted of a series of isolated but correlated events. They unfolded quite simply, all proceeding from the visit of a close friend of mine. She was eight months pregnant, and came to Canada with her four-year-old daughter, Sun, to give

birth to her second child in Toronto. I took on the role of an auntie and caregiver to the little girl for the duration of their stay. The mother had to have a Caesarian delivery due to complications, so I had more time to spend with Sun. This girl reminded me of my own childhood, when I was a keen observer of people and society. I paid very close attention to details and could record a scene in my mind like a movie camera. Also, it was interesting to see that this smart and interesting little girl was experiencing the same kind of loneliness that I used to struggle with as a child growing up in Iran. I was very curious about Sun's interactions with and reactions towards her new born sibling, so I decided to record random shots of her daily activities.



Figure 2: Expressing sisterhood to the newborn

My interactions with Sun were quite pleasant, until one incident triggered an unpleasant childhood memory. The two of us went candy shopping one day, and she noticed that I refused

to try the candy I had bought her. She wanted to know why. I froze for a moment, and then simply replied: “I hate candy.” In my mind’s eye, in that moment, I could picture my eight-year-old self in my school uniform. I tried a piece of the candy, pondering the reason behind my aversion. When my momentary déjà-vu was over, I looked at the four-year-old sitting all alone in the park playground, not knowing enough English to interact with the other kids who were running around. I could not bear the similarity of our childhoods. I asked her if she felt sad about anything. She pointed to the fact that she could not communicate with the other kids, and that she hated English. She also expressed her confusion over that fact that they had to travel so far for her little sister to be born. I tried to explain, and praised her mother for making such an effort to give a better future to her kids. However, my explanations were meaningless to a four-year-old girl who just wanted to communicate and play with the other kids.

I felt overwhelmed by the weight of my own childhood loneliness which resembled her situation. I agreed with her that some things in life are not fair, but I wanted her to know that her struggle was temporary and that she would eventually forget this horrible day once she learned English. But, on the other hand, I kept reminding myself that the things I had experienced as a child were still with me and I could still feel their burden. This simple incident added another layer to my work and I decided to use animation to incorporate my personal story and memories into the film.

## Filmmaker's Background

I am a well-known documentarian in my home country Iran. My filmmaking activity goes back to my first documentary *Life is in Deep Sleep* in 1999. It was a 60 minute film about impoverished and unemployed Iranian youth who stand in long lines, waiting to sell their kidneys. The Iranian government encouraged the process by paying 10,000,000 Rials (\$1000) to the organ donors. I had to make a careful plan to circumvent state censorship due to the sensitive subject of the film. The shooting permit was obtained for a student project and a synopsis for a scientific documentary on kidney failure and transplantation was submitted to the hospital authorities. The shoot was scheduled for one week but we wrapped and ran away after two days of filming before anyone found out about my true intentions. The final product was a weak film full of technical and narrative problems. However, the experience gave me the courage to continue and make several feature documentaries. This led to producing *Hell but Cold* (2000) about young boys living on streets, and *Hot* (2001) about addicted prostitutes. Both documentaries were shot observationally in one of the most dangerous areas of Tehran, Darvazeh Ghar. There were two big parks in the district which were occupied by addicts who injected drugs in front of children. Furthermore, HIV and Hepatitis were epidemic in the area and there was a danger to be stabbed by the infected needle of a mad drug addict. I was nearly killed three times by angry addicts who attacked me with knives. We were filming from midnight to dawn using small handy-cams. The most valuable lesson that I learned during that period was to respect subjects who have nothing to lose. It was by respecting them as individuals and what they had gone through that I was able to earn their trust and confidence, to open their hearts to me.

These two films brought me fame and attention, winning top prizes in all the festivals that

they were entered in. I became known as a young fearless filmmaker who could easily get support and resources for my documentary projects. I did not go back to Darvazeh Ghar for another ten years, but I made documentaries about Afghan immigrants, mental patients, victims of HIV and spinal cord injuries. All these films brought me more attention and success.

It was in the midst of celebrating my success as a documentary filmmaker that an incident changed my views. During a party of fellow artists, a friend of mine shared a secret: that he loved watching pornography whenever his wife is not around. He used every opportunity in her absence to watch porn. I knew that his wife was an easy going liberal woman who would not forbid her husband from watching pornography if she knew about it. So I simply asked: “Why can’t you watch together? Is she going to be mad?” His response was interesting. He said that his wife would not be mad but it would not make sense to him if he had to watch porn in front of his wife. He believed that the whole excitement of the process is to watch it secretly.

His response raised some fundamental questions for me about the value of my documentary practice. I seriously wondered: have any of my documentaries made any meaningful changes in the lives of my characters—or are they merely a form of 'acceptable' pornographic spectacle, to be consumed without consequences? Do they educate the audience? Are these documentaries cinematic and artistic? Why do people watch these films? Do any of these films challenge the viewer and make them think?

It was then that I realized that my so-called prestigious career had been ineffective up to that moment. Documenting the harsh conditions of people and winning awards was pointless and nothing to be proud of, if it didn't change their actual situations for the better. I noticed that people were watching my films because of their need to satisfy their curiosity, and need for excitement. Watching something exotic and inaccessible put them in a state of mind that allowed

them to escape from the realities of their daily lives. Thus, my films were being watched similar to the way that people watch pornography.

I decided to change my approach in filmmaking. Artistic expression became more important in my style. The new chapter in my filmmaking practice began with *An Elegy to Childhood, a Dream* (2007), a feature docudrama about the dreams and the real life of Zohreh, a female prostitute who had ran away from domestic sexual and verbal abuses. This was my first time using a script to shoot and structure a film. I rewrote the script eleven times and developed a full story board before shooting. I feel the final film was more effective than my previous works, because the audience was now engaging emotionally, politically and artistically in the subject of the film, as opposed to just coldly observing and consuming the spectacle of a sex worker's life story.

After a break of seven years, I returned to Darvaze Ghar in order to shoot a new film. I tried to reconnect with the characters of my early films especially the cute lovely boys who used to sleep in the park. Unfortunately, one of them had been executed, one was in jail, one had overdosed, and another had been stabbed to death. I paid a visit to an asylum where I had previously filmed, to try and contact the characters from another film. However, one of the characters had passed away of AIDS, one had committed suicide, and another had become a beggar at a subway station after being expelled for bringing heroin into the asylum. It was too painful and difficult to continue working with such unfortunate people just for the sake of making a movie. The news about what had befallen them was so tragic and heartbreaking that I decided to end that kind of filmmaking and switch to fiction.

My first fiction script, about a boy's childhood traumas, could not get a shooting permit from the authorities because of showing the effect of war on children. Then I wrote another

feature fiction script, *Life with Closed Eyes* (2009), which was made into a film by Rasul Sadrameli, a famous director in Iranian cinema. This journey has led to *Candy Crush*, which is a no-budget combination of documentary and fiction that explores the strong impact of childhood on an individual's adulthood.

## Cinematic Influence

There have been several films which have influenced my approach towards the creation of *Candy Crush*. One of these films is *Malena* (Giuseppe Tornatore, 2000). The use of a young boy as the main narrator was quite influential. Additionally, the film served to revive some of my own childhood memories. Thus, I became interested in the device of narrating a story from a child's perspective, but in this case, not Sun's point of view. Thus, I decided to use my own childhood stories to construct a narration for the film.

Michael Haneke's *The White Ribbon* (2009) is an excellent work in depicting the aberrant behaviours of abused children. The scene in which the kids kill a bird portrays the children as individuals who do not just observe the violent acts of their parents, but reproduce the violence in ways that are even more brutal. The film has inspired me to pay closer attention to the importance of childhood events in shaping the future of individuals. It made me to think about an old classmate of mine who was mistreated due to our perception of her. We considered her a whore and thus everyone used to avoid her, until the day that she was expelled from school. I remembered a day when I finally convinced myself to talk to this eight-year old "whore" of the classroom.

However, she ultimately remained unimportant to me. Despite my regular daily routine of reporting everything to my mother about my school life and classmates, I never spoke about this girl. The indifference of the boys towards the bird in *The White Ribbon* reminded me of my own ignorance and indifference towards this classmate. Thus, *Candy Crush* does not provide a detailed examination of my classmate. I was indifferent to her expulsion, and that callous apathy is reflected in the way that her story is narrated in the film.

Erick Emmanuel's *Oscar and the Lady in Pink* (2009) is another film that has influenced



the classmate's story. The mature love between Oscar and Peggy Blue in Emmanuel's film reminded me of my classmate. She was suffering from early maturity but she was not accepted in society so she had to pay for her love by being expelled from school. The society's lack of understanding had made her lonely and finally lose one of her fundamental human rights, that of education. What happened to her was natural in the sociopolitical climate of the post-revolution era.

Marjan Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2007) reminded me of my own life in Tehran in the early years of the revolution. The film shows the growing tension in the political climate of Iran in the 1970s and 1980s, when the country was in the turmoil of revolution, war and cultural changes. The Islamic doctrine of the revolution sought to purify the society from everything that was considered unholy and religiously unacceptable. Moreover, the revolution encouraged people to spy on one another. As a result, many ordinary citizens had become confused and did not know what they were doing. Not many people could be trusted. Even the local grocery man was suspected of espionage. I remember a sixteen year old boy in my neighborhood who was arrested, jailed for eight years and executed during the mass political murders of the summer of 1988. The only reason for his arrest was the report of a teenager to the Revolutionary Guard that she had seen him reading an opposition paper.

The films that have been influential on me for the war chapter are *The Boy in Striped Pajama* (Mark Herman, 2008) and *Turtles Can Fly* (Bahman Ghobadi, 2004). Both of these films show children in war and how they have to deal with all the suffering and misery. These films reminded me of the Iran-Iraq war, an eight-year conflict that started when I was 8 years old. I remember the nights of that war, when there was no light due to the bombardments. During the war period, many of my friends went to the front and never returned. The sounds of

neighbours weeping for their loved ones used to wake me up in the middle of the night. Tehran's busy streets were empty on the days that we were expecting missile strikes. I remember a time when I closed my eyes and crossed the highway confidently because there were no cars on the road. My mother was a nurse and she had duties that prevented her from leaving her job. She worked in the hospital's urgent care wing. When I was a teenager, my mother took me to the hospital where I learned some of the basic nursing tasks such as injection and taking blood pressure. When the missile strikes began, she was asked by her supervisor to bring me to the hospital to assist the nursing staff. I dressed in a white uniform. My mother was happy and confident, saying that if anything happens, it will at least happen to both of us.

I believe that one of the most important aspects of storytelling is paying attention to details in order to choose the right images, and create the right atmosphere, that together encourage dynamic, engaged emotions. A film that has been inspirational for me is *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980). I have always admired its editing and the little boy's performance. Watching the film over and over has taught me how to cut and capture facial expressions and gestures for documentary and fiction storytelling. This approach has been practiced in *Candy Crush*, working not just with the documentary scenes of Sun and the baby, but also in the design of the animated characters.

Darren Anorofsky's *Black Swan* (2010) has been an inspiration in terms of its depiction of an oedipal generation gap. The relationship between the ballerina and her mother made me think about the effect of generation gaps on the lives of children. The conflict between generations was another major issue in the post-revolution Iran. Life and its values were very different between the regimes of Khomeini and the Shah. The young generation that was raised in the post-revolutionary period could not understand what the older generation had experienced

under the Shah. Similarly, the older generation was not willing to communicate properly with the youth. This generation gap was an important concept during the time that I was making *Candy Crush*.

Marc Forster's *The Kite Runner* (2007) is another film that has influenced me. I was born in a country where religion plays a powerful role in controlling the lives of people. The thoughts and actions of individuals are supposed to be conducted according to the rules of the religion. The ideological and philosophical interpretations of goodness and morality dictate how people should live their lives. The father in *The Kite Runner* has a simple but interesting definition of sin. He states that "there is only one sin, only one. And that is theft. Every other sin is a variation of theft... When you kill a man, you steal a life. You steal his wife's right to a husband; rob his children of a father. When you tell a lie, you steal someone's right to the truth. When you cheat, you steal the right to fairness." In my opinion even a beautiful and to some degree truthful quotation like this can disrupt the notion of judgment and punishment when it becomes a universal concept. It narrows an individual's degree of perception and analysis. Thus, the father in *The Kite Runner* who sees everything in the framework of theft and is very sensitive and intolerant towards stealing gets easily manipulated by his son who had falsely accused his friend Hassan of stealing. If the father had a wider perspective of morality and did not try to reduce morality to a single denominator, theft, he would not be so obsessed about it. Therefore, his judgment would not be as quick and uncompromising, and he would allow Hassan to speak and defend himself. However, the father's narrow perception of morality and obsession with theft as the most evil of all the sins leads to expulsion of Hassan from the house. That was exactly what I had in mind for *Candy Crush*. The grocery store owner who was blinded by the revolution's definition of morality, reports the girl in order to do a "greater good", purifying the society of

moral corruption. Thus, similar to Hassan in *The Kite Runner*, the girl in *Candy Crush* becomes the victim of a rush to judgment. The concept of living blindly by a universalizing edict is not limited to the story of my classmate. I have tried to re-emphasize this idea by talking about my own personal experience of throwing candy down into the boy's garden, to represent the naiveté of my childish love. In other words, I was just obeying a beautiful quote of a friend who once said that candies mean love.

## **Aesthetic Approach**

The aesthetics of the animation convey my intention to present a selective visual illustration of my childhood memory. I had to make an artistic choice to present images that would contain selective information about the story that needed to be said. I wanted my animation drawings to provide minimal information, but still be effective and as meaningful as possible. In other words, the images aim to function like a haiku, with brevity and precision.

The documentary portion of the film mostly consists of close-ups and extreme close-ups. The main reason for this cinematographic decision was to get closer to the subject and emphasize my presence as an observer. Furthermore, this handheld idiom suggested the camera as a device that searches for hidden truth. My main focus was the quest for hidden truths in the actions of the little girl to explore the defining layers of childhood.

In addition, the film lacks dialogue and the soundscape of the film consists of random soundtracks. The main reason for such sound design is how I personally recall memories. It is very rare that I remember voices or dialogues. Usually, memories play back as random images and ambient sounds in my head. Information and language have more of a visual meaning for me. Thus, I thought text would be the best method for visually telling this story.

Furthermore, a TV commercial-like break is inserted in the middle of the film to serve as a third layer. This part is in animation and contains a green screen shot of a reporter announcing the launch of a new product. There is also some coverage of the war on Gaza in August 2014. It was important for me to add this layer because it presents some of my contemporary experiences, in which a woman makes the personal choice to travel for seventeen hours to a foreign land with a 4- year old, in hopes of giving her children the chance to have a better life. But the question is: where in our world would this child be safe? We still see the four-year-old lonely and quiet in the

frames because of her inability to communicate with the other kids. And going back to my personal childhood memories that have a highlighted presence of war in them, would I have still learned to hate candies if I too had the advantage of growing up in a foreign land?

The TV commercial scene raises all these questions that the film tries to deal with. It is essential to compare all the animated graphic illustrations of blood and violence that are presented in the commercial to the sweetness of the candies. The contrast between the violence and the sweetness that represents a childish understanding of love attempts to encourage the viewer to wonder about the reality of the two different situations: the violence and childish interpretation of love. Another question that the film tries to raise is the notion of exhaustion that is associated with each one of those two scenarios. I personally find the commercial to be more tiresome when it promotes an eye drop that can transform the bitterness of violence into the sweetness of candies. This idea reminds me of the natural instinct of adults who try to cover ugly realities with beautiful concepts that are patently false.

## Production

There were several stages in the production of the film. The documentary shooting with the four year old girl began on June 17, 2014, one day before the delivery date. The shoot was a random daily routine that continued for six weeks until the subjects left Canada. I spent two weeks of the six-week period living with the family in order to capture as much footage as possible. The second part which began after the documentary shoot consisted of animation and performance. It took three weeks to brainstorm and develop the idea. It took an entire day to capture the performance on a green screen.

The animation and illustrations were layered in the backgrounds and foregrounds. It was important for the background to reflect realistic images to allow the viewer to have a better understanding of the realistic nature of the story. This realistic quality of the background images makes the final presentation much more effective in the viewer's mind. On the other hand, the foreground images remind us of a little girl's drawings. The original source of inspiration for this process was the drawings of the little girl. This layer was incorporated to create a childish realm for the audience to see.



Figure 3: Candy means love

The third layer, the commercial clip, was added at the end of editing in order to provide the key conceptual element of the film. It was developed with the help of the animator and one of the performers. It fuses the other two layers to show that there is harmony and a direct relationship between the documentary and animation images.



## Visual Style

The film's visual style relies on documentary, animation, and text. These images are arranged in a way that shows contrast and paradox. The little girl's story and my childhood memory are presented in a realistic fashion.



Figure 4: The little girl loved cats. It helped us to get close quickly

However, there is a paradoxical relationship between the two. The natural qualities of real life have been compared to what is natural in a child's mind. We see text which is a language-based form of information, but we also see images that are visual forms of information. We have sounds to convey sonic information and we have silence to highlight other forms of information presented.



Figure 5: Do not call! You will be expelled from school and be illiterate for the rest of your life.

All the contrasts are present in the film to serve a purpose. For the visual presentation, these contrasts of presence and absence of color, along with wide shots in comparison to the extreme close-ups define each other. These contrasts not only create meaning but also create feelings and a sense of time for the viewer.

## **Creative Process with Actors**

The two actors performed in front of a green screen. I had originally provided them with the script to perform my entire memory based on their individual understanding of the text. I asked them to perform together after observing their individual performances. The influence they had on each other's performance shifted the entire nature of the performance. I wanted my film to be filled with contrasts in favor of the story and have the two adult actors perform as kids. I therefore made the two of them work together, in order to discover their childlike manners and behaviors.

Movement was an important factor because I wanted the performance to be exaggerated and theatrical. I avoided a realistic performance in order to enhance the contrast and present it as silhouettes that were layered on the foreground. All the movements were minimal but as effective as possible. Therefore, we studied each movement to decide which ones would be best for the final performance. The movements gained a pantomime-like quality since there were no dialogues. The performance lasted thirty minutes during the first attempt. It took several performance sessions to reduce the time and make it more suitable to a short film. Finally, the performance time was reduced to ten minutes in order to present the most meaningful movements in the shortest amount of time.

## Post Production

Post-production began immediately after the shoot. All the animation illustrations were balanced for color and resolution using Adobe Photoshop. Next, all the animations, silhouettes, documentary shots, and sound tracks were added to the timeline in Adobe Premiere. I placed the rough cuts together and came up with an overview. At this point, I felt like something was missing in the presentation and decided to insert the commercial break in the middle of the film. The silent documentary shots were added to the timeline; then music was added to the timeline in order to find the rhythm of the shots and estimate the cutting points. I had to deal with foregrounds and backgrounds in the animation part of the film. I used Camatasia Studio 7 to screen capture with AVI format. The background was used as the main layer and the paintings were used as the second layer in Photoshop. Next, I recorded what was happening on my computer screen, and the main layer was erased to allow the other pictures to appear at the bottom.



Figure 6: He went to war, and never came back.

The green curtains were made like black transparent shadows and were placed on a blank background that was made up of an old paper illustration. In addition, some YouTube videos (featuring images of playing guitar, making Kachi, and the ultrasound) were downloaded and used in post-production to enhance the film's graphics.

### ***Special Effects***

The animation illustrations were captured on screen and altered in Photoshop to achieve the correct color and resolution. Photoshop was also used to alter the brightness and contrast of the performance shots that were filmed in front of a green screen in order to transform them into silhouettes.

### ***Technical Process***

All shots have been captured in HD with a DSLR camera. The documentary was shot with handheld camera in order to emphasize the documentary feeling of the little girl's daily activities. The shoot relied on available light, and the camera was color balanced according to the lighting conditions of every room.

### ***Sound***

I relied on a personal audio and music library in order to design the sound track of the film. The archive was created a few years back when I asked one of my friends to improvise the sounds and melodies on his instrument and record them for me. This library consists of tracks that can convey different feelings such as love, affection, loneliness, sadness, and danger, etc. All the tracks have been inserted to convey different feelings to the viewer. These tracks are the only sources of audio since the film contains no dialogue. The aim of this approach is to present memory in a stylized, non-naturalistic form, since the characters do not speak and all the

information is narrated by blocks of text on screen.

It was essential to use some Persian audio in order to create the atmosphere of the 1980s in Iran. Thus, audio extracts of some YouTube videos were used to enrich the film's sound design. The sound of students chattering in Persian during break is an example of one of the YouTube sources that were used. All the sound effects were edited and mixed in Adobe Premiere.

## Conclusion

*Candy Crush* is the filmmaker's childhood experiences as well as her new exploration of cinema. The documentary aspect to the film is stylized by animation. The essence of the film is to show that the migrant is running away from her past by changing her geographical location. My next project, *The Story of Two Butterflies* is a feature film about migration. The screenplay is completed and it is ready to be produced. As an immigrant, I believe that I have lots of ideas that can be used to produce films about the concept of migration; a plan that is started with *Candy Crush*.

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## Filmography

*Black Swan*, Darren Aronofsky, United States, 2010

*The Boy in Striped Pajamas*, Mark Herman, United Kingdom, 2008

*The Kite Runner* Marc Forster, United States, 2007

*Life with Closed Eyes*, Rasoul Sadrameli, Iran, 2009

*Malena*, Giuseppe Tornatore, Italy, 2000

*Oscar and the Lady in Pink*, Erick Emmanuel, France, Belgium, Canada, 2009

*Persepolis*, Marjan Satrapi, France, 2007

*The Shining*, Stanley Kubrick, United States, 1980

*Turtles Can Fly*, Bahman Ghobadi, Iran, 2004

*The White Ribbon*, Michael Haneke, Germany, 2009

## Appendix

### *Candy Crush Captions*

- On a warm summer day, I was sitting in our yard, playing with my little ants.
- My mother sat by her daisies, solving a crossword puzzle while taking sips from her tea.
- I was five.
- I don't know why but I suddenly asked her where do babies come from. She gestured towards her zipper.
- So you peed me out? I asked.
- She said no!
- Did you poo me out? I asked.
- She told me to fetch her purse. I got you candies and a puzzle. Go grab them and we will play.
- As I grew older, I always looked for ways to avoid the strange questions kids ask.
- For my friend's little girl, candies and the cat were the distraction I used.
- This was their second time in Canada.
- My friend was eight months pregnant. She wanted to have her second child here so it would have a Canadian passport.
- They were my close friends and I agreed to look after their little girl while my friend was giving birth.
- I was learning to dodge the most difficult questions the little girls asked like a pro.
- Indoor questions:
- TV, the cats and poor Guitar
- Outdoor questions:

- Candies!
- One day before my friend's due date
- I walked the entire distance from King and Dufferin to Yonge and Eglinton.
- If you are not from Toronto, you should know it's a long distance.
- I cried the whole way without even knowing why!
- I made "Kachi," a traditional delicacy expectant mothers are supposed to eat.
- The result really impressed my friends.
- Before going to bed, I watched a video on Youtube which always makes me laugh.
- I put some candies in my purse for the next day.
- I hate candies.
- I was eight years old.
- I had a classmate; she wore glasses and had spotty skin.
- People said she was a whore.
- Her boyfriend was ten years old.
- Police arrested them while playing in a public park
- One day I gathered the courage to go and talk to her.
- She held a piece of candy in her hand.
- I asked her why she liked candies so much.
- She said it was a gift from her boyfriend and it meant love!
- The guy whom she borrowed a coin from, to call her boyfriend, came to school the next day and reported her.
- He said she was a loose girl and shouldn't be allowed to share a seat with the other innocent girls.

- She was expelled from school.
- I never heard about her again.
- The next day I forgot about her and her memory. I was very busy.
- One of their friends came to the hospital to visit them.
- I gave him some candies.
- I thought to myself candies mean love.
- From my window I could see the yards of two houses.
- A boy about two years older than me lived in the first house with his sister.
- The other neighbors were an old couple who put their disabled granddaughter in the yard every morning and took her back in every night.
- She screamed all the time.
- From the day I threw the candy into their yard,
- The boy started working out and counting down in a loud voice.
- I thought he was trying to get my attention.
- The other girl had the exact same feeling.
- The four-year-old girl and I spent a lot of time together.
- I didn't feel the same connection with the baby girl. She was still too young to listen to my stories.
- She didn't speak English and couldn't communicate with the other kids.
- On the way home, she simply asked me, why are we here?
- I bought her a big candy to change the subject.
- And it was candies again.
- I felt so guilty that I didn't look through that window again.

- I was sixteen and the neighbor was eighteen. He went for compulsory military service.
- It was toward the end of the eight-year war with Iraq
- I was sixteen.
- He went to war, and never came back.
- His sister would sit in the yard and stare at his picture in silence for hours.
- The disabled girl would scream in the next yard,
- And I would solve a calculus problem with red candies,
- That tasted like cough syrup.
- The redness would turn my tongue red.
- I sometimes think kids should ask tougher questions like
- “Where do babies come from...?”
- I thought a lot about her question
- Then I took a deep breath and whispered the reasons
- Why I am here into the newborn baby’s ear.